Export Growth Target

22. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of export growth target fixed at the time of announcement of first import-export policy and subsequent policies;

(b) whether Government had achieved the target in any year during the economic liberalisation period;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to achieve the target?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (e) As per DGFT the first import-export policy has been announced under 'Imports and Exports (control) Act, 1947'. The target growth rates, fixed are available from 1995-96. The target export growth rate excluding software since 1995-96 and actual growth rate in US dollar terms are as follows:—

Years	Targert growth rate(%)	Actual growth rate (%) over corresponding period of previous year
1995-96	17	20.8
1996-97	20	5.3
1997-98	18	4.6
1998-99	12.66	-5.1
1999-2000	11.3	11.6*
2000-2001	18	29.57 (April-May)*

*Growth rate for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 is based on Provisional DGCI and S data.

Shortfall till 1999-2000 has been partly due to international factors such as recession in the world market, South-East Asian crisis as well as crisis in Russia and some Latin American countries. Infrastructural constrants and other impediments like narrow basket of exportable goods and low unit value realization were other reasons. A number of steps have been taken to further enhance the export growth which includes reduction in transaction cost through

decentralisation, simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and regions. With the changes in the international situation and the measures taken by the Government the target were achieved in 1999-2000.

Indian Patent Office

23. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Patent Office is faced with several major impediments and bottlenecks in its functioning;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to tone up its functioning so that it can effectively cope with increasing number of violations of patent laws from different quarters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. the major impediments and bottlenecks being faced by the Patent Office are due to manual nature of operations, inadequate manpower and accommodation, limited facilities for international level search and examination and increasing backlog of patent applications.

(c) In order to address these problems, Government has undertaken modernisation of the Patent Offices in order to streamline and rationalise the procedure for grant of patents. This includes infrastructure and human resource development. re-engineering of work procedures, computerisation of operators, networking of offices, focus on clearance of backlog of pending applications and awareness creation. Several steps have already been taken for clearance of backlog of pending patent applications. These include action for recruitment of additional Examiners, hiring of additional accommodation for the patent offices and acquisition of additional computer equipments.

ITC monopoly in tobacco market

24. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether ITC monopoly in the market was leading to heavy lossses to